

Foreword

Although this e-book is short and introductory it is an advanced teaching given by Ming Zhen Shakya. It is a beginning primer for the *mystical* path of Zen Buddhism.

Ming Zhen's style is organic, scholarly and down-to-earth. Her teaching was a direct get-real approach to the mystic's arduous path. Although she believed the path was open to all she was a realist knowing not many would follow it.

She begins with a quote by Homer Simpson, an animated star on TV in the series The Simpsons. Part 1 begins with Homer comparing his power with *God packing a gun* which Ming Zhen goes on to say is *shrinking* God down to human size which she knew was anathema. The Divine is indescribable, inexpressible, immeasurable....and she knew it even though she had a familiar relationship with the Divine which she affectionately and emphatically called, The Boss.

It's important to understand her entry into the work in order to follow the path she presents. We cannot shrink the Divine into a human holster. It is more akin to alchemical detachment and integration.

In Part One she takes us along the historical path of *alchemy* and shows how the two laws, the law of similarity and the law of contagion, were prominent in the alchemical process and are still followed today by many of us. She lays the ground work for part two and three by taking us through the many doors of early alchemists. She disputes the foolishness to think alchemy was merely turning metal into gold and exhorts us to see it as a metaphor for the mystical adept. YES! Indeed. Turn the material into the spiritual; turn the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. YES! Conversion is an alchemical process of the mind.

In Part Two Ming Zhen gives a homegrown example of a woman and her friend. She lays out Stage one with a set of phases showing the alchemical change this woman experiences.

In Part Three she goes further with regimen of a mystic letting us know gun power is not needed for Divine conversion.

May this benefit all beings in the ten directions.

OM NAMO GURU DEV NAMO

FASHI LAO YUE 2018

Alchemical Detachment & Integration

By Ming Zhen Shakya



This e-book is in memory of our dear late Master, Ming Zhen Shakya who gave everything she knew with an open, empty hand. May this teaching benefit all beings.

Part One

Alchemical Detachment & Integration

Commentarial Note: Ming Zhen in Part 1 gives a brief and excellent historical overview of *alchemy* as well as shows the continued influence it has today, i.e., blowing on and shaking dice. This overview gives the reader a background picture of the longstanding interest and activity of infusing spirit into the material realm.



“I felt an overwhelming sense of power - like God must feel when he's carrying a gun.”

-- H. J. Simpson's apology upon being expelled from
the National Rifle Association for misusing a firearm.

God packing heat. A novel concept? No, not really. Simpson, with genius often mimicked but never matched, has called attention to a problem that confronts the spiritual whenever the spiritual confronts the merely religious: God made in the image of limited man.

May we disparage Mr. Simpson's apology, scoff at his pedestrian view of majesty, and deride his ignorance of the attribute omnipotent? No. Infinity gives us all a little trouble. Whenever it's necessary to anticipate the divine intent and the means by which that intent may be affected, we all shrink the boundaries of *omni* and enfeeble the implications of *potent*. We cut God down to size. What is Thor without his hammer? Wotan without his spear? Manju sin sword? And even Great Shiva... does he not carry a trident? So God, like a cosmic Wyatt Earp, walks about with a Buntline Special on his hip.

But God would have used a church key to open his can of Duff and a remote to turn on his TV. That's where H.J. Simpson made his big mistake.

Not only do we impose human constraints upon divine power, we often usurp the rights to that power altogether, making God's supernatural abilities somewhat superfluous. God's power always seems to come with irritating conditions - those precepts or commandments or yamas (ethics of things not to do in Vedanta) and niyamas (ethics of things to do). Why subject ourselves to all those messy rules when we can direct destiny with just a little magical dabbling?

We also tend, while we're at it, to restructure other divine prerogatives and abilities as well. Though every religion insists that God is omniscient and omnipresent, each restricts him to knowing only what its scriptures allow him to know, or forbids him to stray from its borders except, of course, to punish alien non-believers. And depending upon the fashion of the times, God's Constitutional judgments are either rigidly confined to strict constructionist interpretations or else they are so liberal as to permit absolutely any conduct. To stay in power, a god has to stay en vogue.

It is only when each religion's mystics - those who appreciate divinity at an advanced, visionary level - alone or in concert with the mystics of other religions consider divine attributes that we find a less parochial view of things Almighty.

Two "realms of experience" are open to us: the material, *samsaric*, public world of society; and the spiritual, *nirvanic*, private world of the individual. Religion's purpose is to keep peace in the communal world, to mete out reward and punishment for actions that are beneficial or detrimental to the *samsaric* common weal. But each religion presents a mystical ladder, a series

of steps by which we may individually access the spiritual world and enjoy direct contact with divinity. In this *nirvanic*, solitary state good and evil do not exist. And old news is no news. The two realms have nothing much to do with each other.

It should come as no surprise, then, that advanced Zen is no different from any other belief system that provides a regimen for such advanced forms of worship. Whether Daoist, Christian, Islamic, Judaic, Native American, Buddhist or any other established form of religion, "advanced" means "mystical" and mystical is most readily discussed under the generic term Alchemy. Few subjects are as misunderstood.

Originally, Alchemy came in two branches. One probed the nature of matter in the causes either of pure scientific knowledge or, more often, of profitably transmuting base metals into precious ones. This experimental branch became chemistry and we shall exclude it from this discussion.

The other branch concerned itself with spiritual states. The alchemist strove always to attain that gold which nowhere appears on Mendeleev's chart. ("Our Gold is not the common gold.") These aspirants considered the mysteries of matter as directives for attaining spiritual transcendence. They sought psychological liberation, a methodology of self-discovery and emotional independence from societal demands, a process which Carl Jung called "Individuation." In this form, matter had *allegorical* significance (a story that reveals a hidden meaning); the alchemist operating under the assumption that as things were in the starry macrocosm so they were in the human microcosm (as above, so below). Gods were planets, metals and, most importantly, rulers of the various instincts to which the human psyche made obeisance. The planets may have been out of reach, but their earthly, chemical representatives were quite handy; and, things equaling the same thing being equal to each other, the alchemists assumed that by altering one, the other was affected. Let's circle this subject a bit.

While the results that the alchemists sought were achieved around the globe by various civilizations using various methods, the particular form popularly called 'the Alchemical Opus' originated by blending two ancient cultural approaches to the divine: the Greek and the Egyptian. The earliest document known to us on the subject is Egypt's Book of Thoth or its later Graeco version, the Hermetica of Hermes Trismegistus.

Because we are indebted to Greek and Roman culture and mythology - and for no other reason - we employ the gods of their pantheons as the psyche's governing principals. Athena/Minerva is the goddess of wisdom; Hestia/Vesta and Haphaestos/Vulcan of spiritual transformation; Ares/Mars of belligerence; Aphrodite/Venus of male sexual desire; Artemis/Diana of stalking; and so on.

Universally, metals and fire had always possessed sacred characteristics. Smiths, after all, were the world's first priests. But in Egypt the spiritual content of another substance had been exponentially amplified. The Egyptian belief in the afterlife did not involve heaven and hell or reincarnation as it is now understood; instead, the dead, providing that their physical remains were properly infused with this divine substance, could experience their own apotheosis (high point) and become one with the Atum, divinity, itself, and would, in the extended process, come to be, to know, to interact with the heavenly personae, Isis and Osiris, Horus, Re and Nut, et al, in the "other" world. This embalming substance was a sodium salt called Natrium - from n.t.r, their word for "god"; and the corpse was stuffed with it. The divine spirit which resided in this blackening chemical substance transferred itself to the desiccated flesh, preserved now for all eternity.

It is foolish to contend, as many commentators do, that the Greeks failed to apply scientific methodology to their assumptions about matter and declined to subject their theories to experimental verification. We know that Plato, for example, considered the universe to consist of such elemental substances as earth, water, fire and air; but this is largely a mystical explanation and for mystical purposes it is still sufficient - as a look at Kundalini Yoga's Chakra divisions and the Daoist regimen will indicate. But buildings like the Parthenon or ships like the massive, complex trireme were never constructed without clear insight into matter and force. The Greeks had armor, jewelry, navigational instruments and nails; and none of these objects was ever created without considerable trial and error. (Isn't this true today? Do you agree *trial and error* is part of living?)

The Egyptians, too, are said to have been so interested in the affairs of the dead that they neglected completely the affairs of the living. Proof of this is supposed to be demonstrated by the archeological dearth of ordinary dwellings. The pyramids may have been constructed without

mortar, but a small house, if made of archeologically fortuitous stone, would have required it. Egypt not being a heavily forested country and mortar usually requiring the ashes of wood, it should surprise no one that the common man built his home of adobe (clay), a not exactly permanent building material in the Nile's narrow flood plane. The wealth of prosaic objects - for hunting, farming, animal husbandry, and textiles indicate scientific disciplines which can only have had their beginnings in cottage industry; and we have no cause to suppose that those cottages were in any way the settings for unhappy, earthly domestic life.

It is also worthy of note that when a Greek died he more or less automatically found himself in the Elysian Fields, a dull place where he became a "shade" among other shadowy figures; but an Egyptian, as part of the post-mortem fuss, had his spirit ruthlessly cross-examined by the gods. Even saturated with Natrium, he still had to claim exemplary behavior as a living person in order to be acceptable as a dead one.

The idea, then, that chemical change could affect spiritual development came about a few thousand years ago. For as long as the nature of matter was mysterious and quite beyond human comprehension, it was endlessly fascinating and, being so, agreeably yielded to being impregnated with seminal notions of divinity, i.e., the divine in the dirt.

Thus, Greek and Egyptian techno-theology served mostly to unite the characters of the gods and planets with the use of otherwise ordinary substances and to reinforce the idea that what circulated through the heavenly Macrocosmic orbits, circulated through the human Microcosmic orbits; and further - and this is the critical element - the salts which circulated through the body did not have to be the embalmer's Natrium - a lifeless fluid for the dead, but were salts contained in living seminal fluid. The alchemist had found a way to take control of his own destiny.

He knew which other materials - those sacred metals - he could work with. The Sun was gold; Mercury, mercury; Venus, copper; the Moon was silver; Mars, iron; Jupiter was tin; and Saturn, lead. As it was in the one, so it was in the other. Let a man be lustful and he was likely, then as now, to be affected by things venereal (Venus); let him be swiftly changing and he was mercurial (Mercury); let him be belligerent and he was clearly under the influence of Mars. (And was it so long ago that certain soldiers strove to distinguish themselves in battle so that they might be

awarded an Iron Cross?) The moon would make him lunatic; the Tin Man was ever the jovial friend; and the slothful or phlegmatic person was obviously saturnine (Saturn the most remote, coldest furthest away planet). It was nice to have a sunny disposition but better yet to be intelligent for, as Apollo would surely agree; such a one was truly bright. As to the precious seminal fluid, he representationally used antimony or a salt, ammonium chloride, both of which he recorded using an asterisk (star regulus).

Now, instead of passively consulting soothsayers or goat entrails to obtain dubious predictions, divine substances could be manipulated, applied, and transformed to guide and to fulfill the alchemist's will, and all this would be done with a meditation regimen involving interior body control and psychological accommodation. The complete discipline assured his right to experience the ecstasy of divine intercourse. He now had, in a manner of speaking, a ladder by which he could independently climb up to celestial heights.

Experiments with lead, silver or mercury helped an alchemist to overcome or to enhance those characteristics which he sought to alter, providing, of course, that they didn't kill him in the process. (Alchemists often ingested the metals or inhaled noxious fumes.) Acids and bases, acting upon the metals, produced an enormous variety of results, each of which allowed the alchemist to regard a change with the requisite fascination, permitting an easy slide from concentration into meditation. Allegorically he "internalized" the chemical reactions and became sufficiently introverted to draw the macrocosm into the solitary world of his laboratory. As if he were staring into a hypnodisk, he became entranced by chemical alteration; but regardless of whether the state he achieved was hypnotic or meditative, no other human being controlled it. He and only he was privy to the drama enacted within his own collective unconscious.

As one thing complemented or inspired another, the meditative visions organized themselves, permitting classification and consensus, the necessary objectification for study. Attributes could be assigned to various material elements or compounds and the resultant lore - plus, of course, the means of handling the often volatile substances - could be discussed in scholarly treatises.

Still we wonder how matter and spirit were so easily fused.

Divine power, being beyond human imagination, did not always conform itself to earthly expectations. The Other world was so filled with unpredictable events and mysteries that other laws must surely govern it; and the human mind quickly enacted the needed legislation. Laws of Magic regulated the conduct of the known with the unknown and provided for a point of transit between the two worlds.

This "other" *nirvanic* world may have been home to mystical adepts and, naturally, the dead; but the non-initiated living had to accept its existence on faith. The Unknown is always seductive and intriguing; and when people have, by definition, no knowledge of it, they have no choice but to suspend credulity and accept the descriptions and verdicts of soothsayers. A fortune teller could stare into the sheen of an animal's liver or a crystal ball and see the future. He could turn a card and determine a child's paternity.

In order to appreciate Alchemy we first need to consider Sympathetic Magic.

Sympathetic magic is based upon two laws: the Law of Similarity which says that like produces like, and the Law of Contagion which says that things which have once been in contact continue to act upon each other at a distance - long after physical contact between them has been severed. Frequently these two laws are simultaneously applied.

We can best appreciate sympathetic magic in the Voodoo Doll. According to the Law of Similarity, an image of a person is constructed and then, let's say, a pin or knife is stuck into the effigy's leg, and the person in whose image the effigy was created suffers a corresponding injury to his leg. Heat applied to the effigy will cause the model to become feverish. In the right hands, the fellow can become the 'teaching case' for a medical college's entire course of study.

Similarity can be combined with Contagion to create an even higher degree of efficacy by taking something that was part of the victim - hair or fingernails or even cloth that contains his sweat, and mixing it into the effigy and then inflicting the desired damage. This, to the great relief of look-alikes, leaves no doubt about the identity of the intended victim. (DNA)

These laws operate in a more subtle fashion when we consider the miracle-producing abilities of relics and such material objects as "pieces of the True Cross"- splinters of wood which have had

direct contact with the body of Christ. Likewise, the teeth of the Buddha, retrieved from his crematory ashes, have been enshrined in grand stupas which have themselves become the sites of huge temples. The power of such relics cannot be underestimated. Such an enormous demand for them exists that ten sequoias could not account for all the pieces of the True Cross in existence today just as schools of barracuda could be dentured with all the Buddha's teeth preserved around the world.

The mummy of the Sixth Patriarch is venerated and miracles are said to have been occasioned through the intercession of his bones which, themselves, are said to behave in miraculous ways. During the 1960's Cultural Revolution, one of the Red Guards struck the seated mummy with a rifle butt, scattering the bones onto the floor. (I have had college graduates tell me that they knew for a fact that the bones bled real blood at the impact and that the particular Red Guard who struck the mummy died an immediate and inexplicable death, shame somehow having inspired his demise.)

Miraculous medals, icons, statuary, and various artworks are created to assist in the invocation of the divine presence; but whenever it is actually possible to touch the object - as a statue that may be rubbed or kissed or as a pendant miraculous medal which hangs against the skin, the effect is accordingly magnified.

The Shroud of Turin is believed to contain the imprinting blood and perspiration of Christ. It is not just an old piece of linen. Though people are no longer permitted to touch the Shroud, still pilgrimages are made to establish direct eye-contact with it. It is important to note that despite carbon-dating which insists that the shroud is of medieval fabrication; it is still venerated. A fervent believer will readily accept the explanation that the wrong part of the Shroud was tested, or that extraneous substances skewed the test results, or even that God has deliberately permitted a negative result in order to test the faith of the believer. And who can argue with this?

We find here the great strength - or weakness - of faith. Once one miraculous occurrence is accepted, the possibility for all miraculous occurrences is established and, because by definition the miraculous is beyond human understanding, people cannot differentiate between the claims. Force equals mass times acceleration only in the material world. Mass, by definition, does not

apply to spiritual things and is therefore zero. And if we admit that the laws of physics can be cast aside or rendered meaningless as they in fact are in the "other" non-material world, we can attribute to divine fiat any force. A blanket exemption from rational consideration is given. Since no population suffers a lack of charlatans, persons in authority must determine the validity of otherworldly occurrences and claims - in accordance with the terms of their own religion. To the uninitiated, there is no way to distinguish between unknowns: the blanket of possibility smothers all consideration.

In this same way, for example, hedonism ceases to be useful as an explanation of human conduct because it gives the blanket motivation of pleasure to all actions. The masochist submits to punishment because he enjoys receiving it - just as the sadist enjoys inflicting it. The mother suffers to protect her children because she enjoys the exercise of maternal responsibility - just as the mother who abandons her children does so because she enjoys the freedom from such responsibility. The miscreant errs because he enjoys the pleasure of sin; the saint is benevolent because he enjoys the pleasure of righteousness. There is no willful behavior that defies hedonism's explanation. In explaining everything, it explains nothing.

We find an astonishing example of accommodating the prerogatives of the "other" world in the remarkable Papal selection process of the College of Cardinals. After the white smoke ascends the chimney, there is great jubilation; and all the pre-selection wrangling - the machievellian intrigues, deceits, manipulations, inducements, and factional disputes are immediately forgiven, all having been regarded as not only essential to the process, but divinely ordained to assure the very result that was obtained. To an outsider, such infighting would seem designed to thwart consensus - but not to those involved in the process.

Because like produces like, we repeat a sequence of events that seems to us to be links in a concatenation of dependent events. A tennis player faces a difficult opponent in a tennis match. He happens to be wearing a green cap. He wins the match and associates the victory with the cap. He plays another match and, naturally, he wears his lucky green cap, the tennis-playing power of which is confirmed if he again wins. Not until he eventually loses is the cap divested of its manna.

A professional hockey team defeats a difficult opponent after a recording of Kate Smith singing God Bless America has been played. Thereafter the team insists that this recording be played before every game. They attribute their victory streak to this specific mantra, an incantation phonographically reproduced.

Each of us trusts that if we repeat a certain sequence of actions in a precise way we will insure the prescribed result. This is the Law of Similarity: like produces like. This is the force of ritual. And when it is combined with Contagion - human contact with the divine which, if had only once, is sufficient to repeat or maintain itself endlessly, we have created a sacred ritual to which we give full force and credit.

When priests who have been ordained in great world religions cannot support each other's views of the unknown or of the great God who presides over the unknown, we can hardly look with disdain upon the proponents of pseudo science and witchcraft and cultish creeds. In every city we find psychic hotlines; fortune tellers; astrologers; Tarot readers; palmists; spirit channelers; and spiritual guides of every professional cast. When wrong, as they usually are, they are safe from retribution. (Not until the advent of the 900 number have civilized people considered restoring the practice of burning them at the stake.)

Even a form of the ancient belief in geomancy is revived by Feng Shui 'priests'. Obvious failures in interior decoration are given sinister characteristics, just as obvious corrections are attributed to spiritual prowess usually reserved for those who are proficient with dowsing rods. Feng Shui consultants will counsel an executive not to sit with his back to the door, a positional stratagem for which they cannot take credit - the Mafia having discovered it long ago.

Before tossing the dice, a gambler faithfully repeats a mantra, perhaps, "Come to papa!" He blows upon the dice because of the law of Contagion. His breath has a divine component: breath is life and he seeks to transfer the divine element, the prana or chi or manna from his lungs to the dice.

Again, because like produces like, and because in Chinese the word for death is also the word for the number 4, some hotels in Las Vegas, for example, in consideration of their Asiatic clientele,

eliminate both the 4th and the 40th floor. Non-Asiatic often fear the number 13 to an even greater degree.

We are all conscious of spiritually charged substances: the font of holy water is not a bowl of ordinary H₂O just as the water from the Ganges has purifying effects far beyond its ordinary laving ability. Sin is washed away. Maytags and Mississippis cannot do that.

Thus, not only ancient people, but all people are susceptible to the wiles of charms, to the laws of Sympathetic Magic. And, especially since it concerns alchemy, astrology, too, obeys these laws.

Because the earth rotates on a 23.5 degree axis as it revolves around the sun, certain star clusters are seen annually to rise above the horizon, drift along a zodiacal stream and then descend into the underworld. Their rising might bring annual flood or drought or might deliver the year's most clement weather. At the rising of one constellation we might find that flocks of sheep or cattle reproduce, or birds migrate, or trees flower or fruit. Not only flora and fauna but human affairs, too, seemed signaled by the appearance of these constellations. The Law of Similarity kicks in, abetted by imaginative literature. Personalities and other psychological characteristics can be assigned the bearers of such signals. And seven special spheres - Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn, Jupiter, the Sun and Moon which keep even more impressive schedules, are the abodes of the gods, themselves. For as long as the dwelling and that which dwells within it are effectively conjoined, the Law of Contagion will take effect: These planets, having been in direct contact with their eponymous divinities, have certain characteristics and wills of their own that may be studied in order that those divine actions which effect mortal man might be predicted.

Forewarned is forearmed. And when these planets transited the various zodiacal constellations, what could the observer not learn from the encounters? They, too, influence, man's psyche and portend disaster or success for his worldly efforts.

There is no way to correlate the numerous systems of nomenclature used by the various alchemists. Their terminologies varied enormously not only because of time and place and custom, but because of the central mystery of the mystical path: spiritual androgyny called Divine Marriage, The Union Of Opposites, or The Rebis Experience; and the regimen that was

frequently employed in an attempt to reach that state: the imagined circulation of retained seminal fluid called "Clearing the Channels" or "The Microcosmic Orbit".

Few people then and probably fewer now understand the transsexual nature of this Union of Opposites. Always there was a suspicion that the celibate mystic was homosexual or bisexual and that his peculiar preference to withdraw from society indicated some subversive activity. Frequently, he was suspected of corrupting anyone who got close to him. St. John of the Cross became a Bride of Christ (i.e., attained androgyny) and wrote marvelous poetry in the guise of a woman. He was incarcerated in a monastery and brought before the altar every day so that each of his fellow monks could flog him. Officially he was charged with refusing to wear shoes. (He wrote most of his exquisite poetry while in his cell.) Shams of Tabriz, the spiritual beloved of Rumi was murdered by Rumi's son because the latter feared that Shams had made his father a homosexual. (Rumi emerged from mourning's isolation to write magnificent love poetry in Shams' name, *The Divan of Shams of Tabriz*.)

Mystics, for a variety of reasons, were so often persecuted in Christian Europe and the Islamic Middle East that inadvertently these regions, by forcing their mystics to go "underground" created the setting for the creation of glorious literature. The merely enlightened can write great poetry. But the mystical writings of Christianity and Islam remain in a class by themselves. Glorious is too puny a word to describe the works of the great Catholic and Muslim mystics.

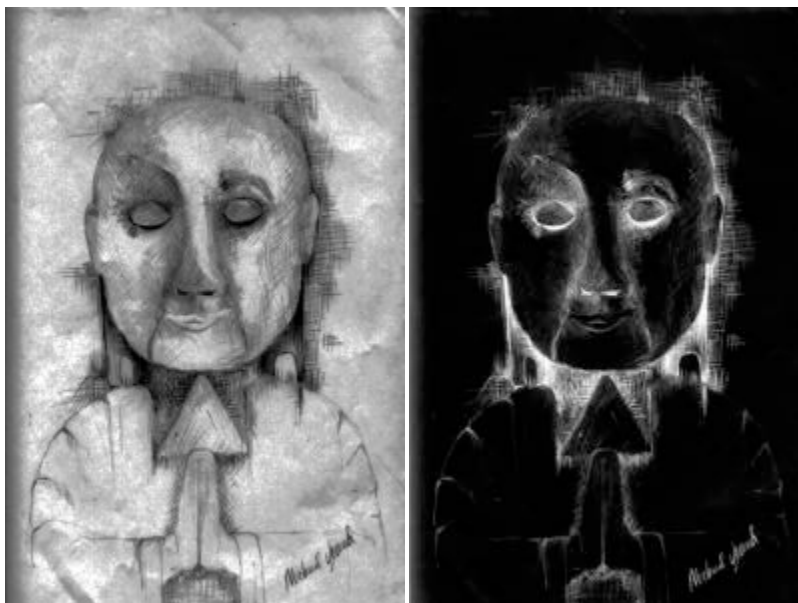
China and India never persecuted their mystics. The regimen, with certain omissions of information which was conveyed privately by master or guru to student, was written down and distributed. Perhaps it was this openness and accessibility that made the regimen so susceptible to the corruptions of overt sexuality. The excesses of Tantric sexual practices in Buddhism and Hinduism and of Dual Cultivation in Daoism had a negative, stultifying effect. Those who use women as if they were articles of laboratory equipment have already violated basic ethical constraints, prohibitive of spiritual advancement. In celibate orders the ancient regimen was followed; and we find today, intact, the great monasteries and ashrams in which true Yoga is practiced.

(PART TWO features a woman's regimen that did not require any special alchemical discipline)



Part Two

Alchemical Detachment & Integration



“And now if any be ignorant, let him be ignorant.
I know not what more to say and not transgress the Silence of Pythagoras.”

- Sir Isaac Newton, Alchemical manuscript, The Regimen
(MSS 1032B RB NMAH, Smithsonian Inst.)

Spiritual Alchemists never attempted to cut God down to size and turn him into a lawman they could bribe, trick, cajole, or outdraw. They were always mindful of the Ground of all Being, of the Supreme God of all those lesser gods with whom they had to struggle each day of their lives. No taint of immorality colors the records of their investigations: Newton, Ashmole, Ripley, Boehme, Paracelsus, Avicenna, Dorn, Meier, et al., were good men of unsurpassed intelligence; but they, who could see, were ever mindful to get out of the way of the blind. The cruel prejudices of lesser men always threatened their well being; and for this reason alone, they were secretive in their pronouncements and cryptic in their writings.

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Even as far back as ancient Egypt's alchemical regimen, personal integrity and ethical conduct, striven for, achieved, and maintained were mandated for anyone who wanted to reach the divine journey's destination. Natrium or no natrium, a heaven-seeking soul still had to be questioned by Osiris about its earthly conduct; and that soul had better be able to give the right answers.

And so, according to custom, whether a person intended to enter heaven before or after death, he couldn't rely upon a priest's absolution or the purchase of indulgences. Then, as now, the best way to deal with sin was to avoid it; and the best way to avoid it was by avoiding those with whom one might be tempted to enjoy it. It was both ironic and fortuitous that the same suspicion of sinister activity which forced an alchemist into seclusion also provided him with the ideal conditions for creating an environment which did not conduce to moral error.

While the uninitiated soul would look to an external god to praise or blame according to his blessing or misfortune, the alchemist was required to look within himself to find the cause of pleasure or distress. As the gods were in the macrocosm, so they were in the microcosm. They were inside him and he had to deal, one-on-one, with them and their impulses. The assistance he needed to gain some measure of control and some understanding of their unpredictable natures he obtained by projecting divinity into substance and then operating on the substance. This was a completely new theo-psychology. It seems odd to us now to think that intelligent people could so ingenuously imbue matter with divinity, but we must consider chemistry's mystique. Nobody understood chemical reactions; and so, for as long as these reactions were so confounding and mysterious, they were a blank sheet upon which any imaginative explanation could be written. We who have 'miraculous' medals and charms of every kind and who read our horoscopes every morning should not find it all that strange that these intelligent people saw mercurial behavior in mercury.

But chemicals were only part of the alchemical path. Just as a tennis or hockey player practices diligently to perfect his skill and does not rely upon lucky caps or songs, the alchemist, as well, did not limit his labors to contemplating the mysteries of those chemical reactions he caused and observed in his laboratory. Again, as it was in the laboratory and the cosmos, itself, so it was within his own body; and before the precious metals could be infused with a usable divinity, just as they had to be mined in some mountain's drift or shaft, they had to be mined in the earth of

what we now call Muladhara (root chakra); as they were bathed in a sluice, so they were rinsed in the waters of Svadhisthana (sacral chakra, dantien); and then they were smelted in the crucible of Manipura (solar plexus, personal energy). This took heat; and the Yoga of the Psychic Heat, known to every shaman on the globe, had to be accomplished to furnish the fire, the requisite spinal conflagration. The alchemist had to be a yogi, a master of fire.

If this were all there was to it, the functions of these lower chakras or "wheels" would not have mandated such secrecy. The alchemist needed salt - the body's own natrium - as part of the vital compound; and he obtained this salt, often called the Prima Materia, from seminal fluid which he figuratively "circulated and distilled." This was the true discipline: acquiring proficiency in meditation "on seed."

An array of actual and imaginative operations had to be performed on the mixtures of energies obtained from the earth and air, from a variety of body fluids, and from the representative chemical substances. Phases of the work received such color coding as black (nigredo), white (albedo or leukosis), yellow (cinitritas) and red (rubedo). Sulphur was a Sun substance which turned blood red when heated; metallic iron rusted to martial red; copper oxidized to green which naturally became Venus' color. An iridescent patina which formed on oxidizing silver became Diana's Doves. The spiritual work was further encoded in such procedures as, "Calcination, sublimation, solution, putrefaction, distillation, coagulation and tincture," or as "Dissolution, maceration, sublimation, division, and composition," or as "Dissolution, purification, introduction (into the furnace), solution, putrefaction, multiplication, fermentation, and projection." There was no end to the terms and no consensus among those who employed them. It was metaphorical chemistry... or chemical metaphor.

In concert with external laboratory experiments, the work of "circulating" seminal fluid initiated the internal, "spiritual" Opus proper, and, inasmuch as the fluid figuratively constituted the main substance of the Philosopher's Stone, the Immortal Foetus, it also marked the work's terminal phase. But before the Lapis could be produced, many degrees of achievement had to be attained. The worker started as an apprentice, went on to journeyman capability, and finally became an adept, a master. Meditational disciplines had to be learned, and the requisite morality acquired; and there were also certain stirrings in the cauldron of the collective unconscious that had to be

felt - certain agitations that had to be calmed. Gods projected out into the world had to be withdrawn from society and restored to the "bottle" of the mind; even as the alchemist himself had withdrawn. And even after all his work, he could not force the most important event of the Opus to occur: Divine Marriage or the Rebis Experience. This crucial experience, which in Zen is called The Union of Opposites, was granted through Grace, alone. The idea that the event could be bypassed and the Divine Child produced without benefit of a maternal parent, may be acceptable in cloning circles, but nowhere else. Even Divine Children must have two parents: one mortal (the alchemist) and one Divine, his Anima or Bodhisattva. Divine Marriage, in Jungian terms, is the stupendous event called Integration of the Anima/Animus.

Integration of an archetype, as we will later explore, is not mere withdrawal of an archetype. Just because a man is not at the moment in passionate love with a woman and has therefore got his Anima residing in his psyche does not mean that he has integrated her. The man, perhaps as a result of heartbreaking loss, may say, "Never again!" which then makes it almost a certainty that there will be an "again." Such utterances are consciously made pronouncements - thoughts expressed; and therefore they constitute hubris of the worst kind. (No human ego can tell the powerful inhabitants of the collective unconscious how they shall or shall not behave. Archetypes are instincts and instincts have minds of their own and regard themselves as being utterly divine. A true "never again" is beyond thought; it is of an action that is 'unthinkable'.)

Merely withdrawn, a goddess behaves like a tiger in a straw cage: she paces, only temporarily inconvenienced, and amuses herself by making the man prissy, overly fastidious, moody and capricious - a caricature of femininity. Then, when she desires - and not until she desires - she will escape to drape herself upon some mortal woman before whom the man will kneel in worship. And the man finds himself wonderfully in love again, for as long as the divine illusion lasts.

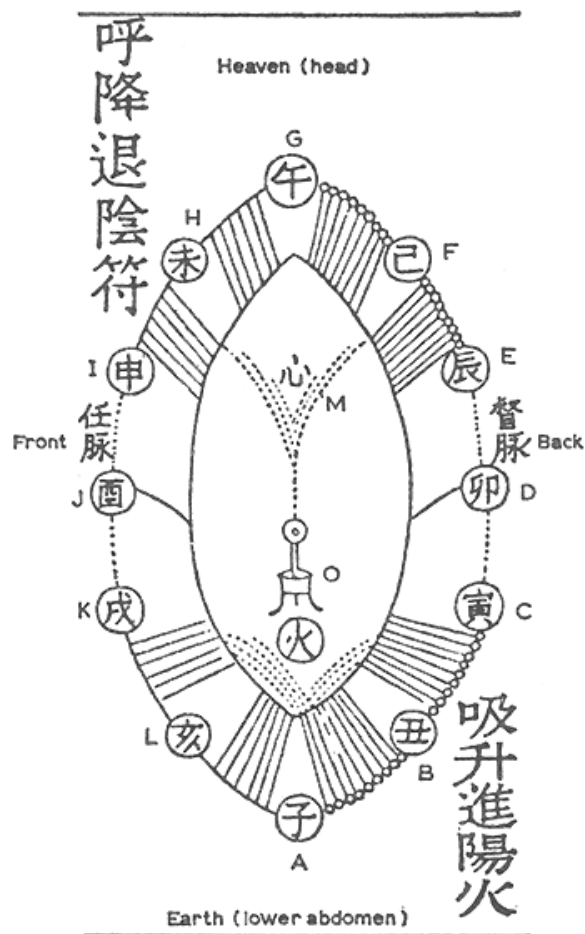
An integrated love-goddess, his true soror mystica, has a life of her own in the "other" world which she allows the man vicariously to enjoy whenever he enters the meditative state.

Jung called the method of entering this meditative state "Active Imagination" which is probably the worst term he could have used since it suggests daydreaming and not a disciplined entrance

into a Mandala's sacred setting. The ego does not direct other-world actions. It witnesses them but does not alter them. They, on the other hand, alter his consciousness. The beauty of the old alchemical opus, at any of its levels of achievement, was precisely this: that in the act of projecting characteristics and events upon surrogate chemicals, an alchemist acted and reacted unconsciously. Entranced, he was suggestible.

As we now employ the term 'alchemy' it indicates all the various methods of spiritual discipline; the original alchemy, however, required much more in the way of obedience to Sympathetic Magic's Laws of Similarity and Contagion. For this reason, once the science of chemistry came fully into being and chemical substances lost their mystique, it was no longer possible for a practitioner to bring the same kind of involved enthusiasm to the various tasks. Still, by avoiding such demystifying academic inquiries, the alchemists were able to pursue their programs. We cannot read Isaac Newton's handwritten accounts of his observations of chemical operations in which he refers to "the menstrual blood of a sordid whore" or "cream of Virgin's Milk" or "sperm of our Mercury" without knowing beyond doubt that he was in fact imbuing chemicals with spiritual character - and was certainly not trying to determine a gravitational constant or solve a problem with fluxions.

Since alchemy involving chemicals was only one of many methods used to attain spiritual goals, the same results could be had, and often were, by people whose only regimen consisted in taking their religions seriously. They were told to love their enemies; and as difficult as that demand was to fulfill, they fulfilled it and began the great ascent. All of the world's successful mystics enter the Rebis Experience's Bridal Chamber; but few of them ever enter a laboratory.



The Microcosmic Orbit showing points A, G, D, J as the four cardinal points. M is the Heart and O is the fire in the "stove." From: Taoist Yoga: Alchemy & Immortality by Lu K'uan Yu, (Samuel Weiser, Inc.)

The first stage of the work:

As Jung has noted, two archetypes exist both inside and outside the psyche: the Persona and the Shadow (both aspects as Enemy and Friend). Pride and anger, and a certain insecurity that requires the comfort of a best friend-alter ego, evidence these archetypal projections. The Friendly Shadow needs to be integrated so that it can become the guide or companion through the great journey of the Opus, just as Dante had his Virgil and Jung had his Philemon. The spiritual alchemist, likewise, had to be free of anger. Nobody gets anywhere on the spiritual path if he involves himself with friends or enemies, or tries to move forward holding up a heavy Persona, a personally designed mask, behind which he deliberately hides his true face.

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Since he must control his ability to enter the meditative state, the practitioner first acquires proficiency in meditation. Again, this state is not the empty-mind state of Quietism. It is a state in which he can concentrate and then, through intense focus of his attention, penetrate the precincts of the Ideal world. He also masters control of the breath and the ability to put his mind "inside" his own body and feel his pulse beating wherever he directs his attention, in particular on the Hara, a point deep in the abdomen where the aorta bifurcates. He learns to control his eye movements in a variety of exercises.

The spiritual alchemist who actually worked in a laboratory would also use chemical reactions as we would use yantras or other objects which engage the eye and the imagination and lead into meditation. (Commenting upon Isaac Newton's prodigious meditative powers, his assistant said that he'd often leave the laboratory in the evening while Newton sat staring meditatively at an ongoing chemical reaction; and when he returned the following morning, he'd find the old man still staring, seeming not to have moved a muscle during the night.)

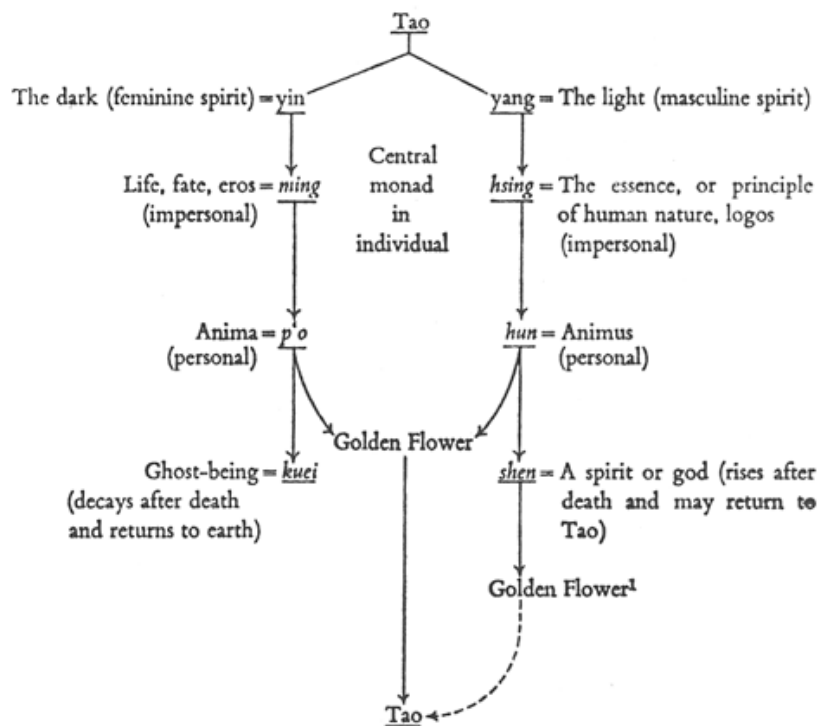


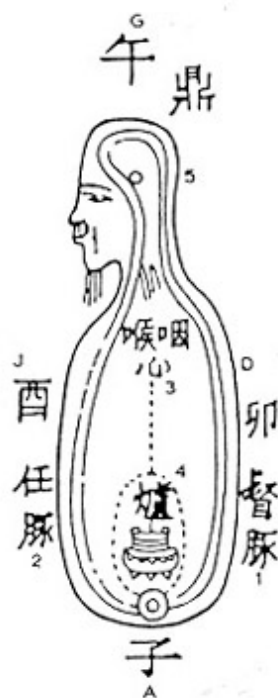
Diagram of the Chinese concepts of Golden Flower or Immortal Spirit-body which gives the additional information that, "As there is ample evidence in the text to show that Buddhist

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influences represented the Golden Flower as coming ultimately only from the spiritual side, that fact has been indicated by the dotted line leading down from *shen*. However, in undiluted Chinese teaching, the creation of the Golden Flower depends on the equal interplay of both the yang and the yin forces." From *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, translated by Richard Wilhelm, (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

In his contemplations, the practitioner would try to understand his own impulses and the actions of others by relating them to the various chemical responses. Artful illustrations and diagrams, mythological tales, wisdom of the East in both the Judaic Cabala and in the remnant practices of mystery religions, and numerous Biblical parables also served to aid such contemplative purpose.

Adam McLean, who has done so much to illuminate ancient alchemical works, in his *The Alchemical Mandala*, (Phanes Press), comments on a famous illustration which first appeared in Daniel Mylius' *Philosophia Reformata* of 1622: "It shows us a mandala centered upon the Tree of the Soul, beneath which an old philosopher is instructing a young knight. They raise their left hands in greeting, indicating the esoteric purpose of their meeting (the left being the 'sinister' side of mystical and hidden things). This philosopher is the Wise Old Man within us all, while the Young Man is the explorative, investigative aspect of the soul that seeks enlightenment and quests after the wisdom of the spirit. The Old Man leans upon a staff, representing his long experience, while the Young Man, as if a knight on the quest bears a sword, a weapon of the intellect, to arm him on his exploration.



Microcosmic orbit showing cardinal points, heart and stove. Taoist Yoga: Alchemy & Immortality, Lu K'uan Yu (Samuel Weiser, Inc.)

"Between these two figures stands the Soul Tree, bearing the Sun, Moon and the five planets. This is the realm which the being of the alchemist must penetrate, the seven spheres of the planetary forces in the soul which he must traverse and integrate. He must also bring together the King and Queen archetypes of the male and female forces in the soul, as well as the Four Elements: Earth, and the Fire breathing salamander, on the left; and Water, and Air represented by the bird, on the right."

To a modern Parsifal, this illustration is particularly significant since it takes the Opus out of the laboratory. We find no flasks and beakers in the drawing.

But what replaces the metals and acids when we are no longer fascinated by the mystique of chemical reaction? "The Goddess unveiled is not the goddess at all," says an old maxim. There needs to be a seductive curiosity - but about what? Usually, it is psychological trauma that provides the impetus for self-investigation and discovery. We experience bitterness and pain (Buddhism's First Noble Truth) and seek to find a Way that will free us from such calamity. We

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are disillusioned and require clarity of vision. The outer world has brought us chaos; and we seek the inner world's promised cosmos, order. What we need, then, is to become impervious to the manipulations of people and fate. We want to acquire 'holy indifference' by which it is meant that we are self-contained individuals who are unaffected by the conditional world's benefits or injuries.



The Alchemical Mandala: A Survey of the Mandala in the Western Esoteric Traditions, by Adam McLean (Phanes Press).

Since the Opus cannot commence until the Archetypes of the Shadow and Persona are withdrawn from the world and integrated into the psyche, it is necessary to determine how, without analyst, laboratory, or miracle, this event can be accomplished.

A few years ago I had intended to write about the Opus and asked an adept, a woman I knew, if she'd share her technique for integrating these troublesome archetypes. Here is her account. I call attention to the peculiar result of this which all of us who follow the Opus can verify: the strange inability to function in groups.

(Recall that members of a group, in deference to their Personas, seek approval and attention from the group leader or, sometimes, even to replace him; and to gain this elevated status, they tend to

form factions - projecting the Friend upon their allies and the Enemy upon their rivals within the group. When a person has integrated both aspects of the Shadow (friend and enemy) and has not merely temporarily withdrawn them, he has no archetype available to project and thereby to form attachments or aversions to any faction. He is not neutral, either. We have elaborated upon Buddhism's peculiar "no and not-no" approach elsewhere; it is sufficient now to say that such a person who has freed himself from the herd instinct is neither neutral nor non-neutral. He simply is not involved.)

I reprint with kind permission the following edited account of the integration of the Shadow and Persona: The writer called it, "My De-Sentimental Journey."

"I remember my last best friend, a woman with whom I had gone to grade school and junior high school. We could walk to school together, see each other all day, walk home and then in the evening talk to each other for a few more hours. We would giggle hysterically over trifles, wear each other's clothes, and never have a difference of opinion about music, movies, boys and fashion. We were too young to date, but we did play pinochle on Saturday evenings with a couple of brothers who lived down the street from my friend's house. We never had any money but neither did any of our other friends so we didn't notice our poverty.

"My friend's father had been killed in WWII; and when her mother finally remarried the family moved away to a distant state. Our correspondence dwindled to notes on Christmas and birthday cards; and then, a few years later, married, she moved back to the suburbs of our town, and we renewed our friendship. It was late in the summer.

"To me it seemed as if those years had changed nothing. There was a bond of friendship that had never been broken. Bonds of friendship are more elastic than other bonds. Separation may stretch them a bit, but rarely does it break them.

"Though times were still lean, she and her husband led a well-fed existence; and in this they differed from the rest of our society of old friends, few of whom had achieved any financial success.

"They had a pretty house - an acre of ground around it - two luxury cars and a dog and cat that were both pedigree animals. I remember her scent: she wore Joy by Jean Patou. Her clothes were elegant. She and her husband loved going to Broadway musicals and had the original cast recordings of all of them on vinyl LPs. I remember that her husband would do a great imitation of Eliza Doolittle's father in *My Fair Lady*. He'd sing and dance to *Get Me To The Church On Time!* and those of us who saw him laughed heartily, envious that we hadn't seen the original stage production. I felt so privileged to call them my friends. Aside from the comfort I found in familiarity, I enjoyed a reassuring pride every time I drove down their lovely tree-lined street and pulled into their driveway. They were by our standards rich and important; and I, alone among our friends, was on intimate terms with them.

"I could see evidence that she was - now I'd call it avaricious - but then I would have called it frugal. Projection's sentimental trajectory does that to our point of view. What I aimed to see, I saw.

"Yes, I was aware that she was more than thrifty. Everything had a price except the time and effort she spent in determining it. But this peculiarity only added an amusing interest to the portrait I had drawn. I laughed at the way she searched the newspapers for bargains in canned peas or hamburger. I was interested, I suppose, in only those activities that brought us into each other's company. Aside from occasional lunches, dinners and parties, we regularly - for one season, anyway - played pinochle on Tuesday nights. As in the old days, she and I were partners; we played against her husband and her brother who had come to live with her. We never played for money.

"She and her husband had several small businesses: they sold wholesale lots of jewelry for organizational fund raising, and they also managed the local sale and distribution of a line of specialty baby furniture.

"In those days people were not so mobile as they are today. Those of us who lived in the inner-city had neighborhood stores - groceries, barbershops, notions - shops of this nature; but if we wanted to shop for something unusual, we had to take the bus downtown to where the department stores were clustered. Pregnant women were not inclined to travel; so house parties

were frequently given to sell various items such as makeup, lingerie, and baby furniture. One young woman would host the party and invite all her female friends and relatives. She'd receive a gift and a sales' commission for her trouble.

"Aside from enlisting all our old friends, my friend obtained hostesses by advertising in the newspaper for housewives who wanted to make money at home. She'd offer a respondent a 10% commission on sales plus an additional 5% commission on the sales of anyone else she could induce to hold another party. She sold several items, among them a stroller, a child's canvas car seat, and her top-seller, a kind of wheeled play-and-eating table. It was a popular item, having a plastic tabletop and a seat that cleverly adjusted to accommodate a growing child. These were rather expensive and could easily cost a few days' pay. She would come to the party and demonstrate the samples. The guests, enlivened by the strong coffee which she supplied, were always expansive; and in that convivial and socially-competitive atmosphere they'd each sign a purchase order for merchandise many of them couldn't afford. Then, in a couple of weeks, the furniture would be delivered to the hostess who had contracted to pay for them. It was her responsibility to collect from the individual purchasers.

"Without trying to gain the knowledge, I became aware through overheard discussions that her net profit on each sale was in excess of 30% and also that the profit was not limited to the sale. I knew that she would sell the names and addresses of the customers to a diaper service, a baby photographer, an insurance agent, among others; and because these leads were particularly good ones, she'd receive immediate payment for each lead. I was present several times when a salesman came by and paid cash for a lead-sheet.

"In November, for my birthday, she gave me an old and valuable rosary. It was large, sterling silver, with beautiful lead-crystal beads. Her husband's aunt had bequeathed it to her, and she wanted me to have it. I wept when she gave it to me. It was so incredibly generous. Christmas was coming and I knew she had admired a slate coffee table we had seen in a shop window, so despite its heavy price tag, I bought it for her.

"And then many of our old friends who had acted as hostesses for her began to call me to grumble about the mistreatment they were experiencing. They always prefaced their remarks by

sarcastically supposing that I'd surely be interested in the kind of person my friend really was. I'd immediately derail the line of abuse, asking why they were complaining to me. Why not call her directly? I assumed they were trying to drive a wedge between her and me because they were jealous of our friendship. When they charged that she was cheap and conniving, I told them of the beautiful rosary she had given me for my birthday.

"One day I received a call from a cousin of mine who had acted as a hostess for one of these home sales' parties. She complained bitterly about my friend's greed and her unethical business practices. She claimed that the delivered merchandise was clearly inferior to the samples shown; and that when she complained she was reminded that there could be no returns, a policy stated on the purchase order. She also resented her collection tactics. Not only was there no grace period for payment but a threat was made to contact her husband at work or, if necessary, to take legal action. She was, my cousin said, a con artist. I recall fatuously disagreeing with this assessment of her character. 'She's always been honest with me,' said I, defending her with no personal knowledge whatsoever about her business ethics. I found it ironical that my cousin further insisted that although she had recruited additional hostesses, she had not received the promised 5% commission on their sales. The conversation ended with a warning to me that I'd come to regret my blindness.

"There's an old story about a foolish king whose uncle is planning his assassination; and a servant who has overheard the plot comes and tells the king who promptly tells his uncle about the servant's perfidy. The uncle says, 'Ah, the poor fellow must have lost his mind. I'll see what I can do to help him.' And then he has the servant killed and proceeds with the regicide. I actually considered telling my friend about this conversation, but my cousin had already called her and related my remarks; and so my friend thanked me for defending her so vigorously. I had now become the champion of her honesty.

"And then, early in December, she and her husband went away for a week to one of their regular jewelry buying trips. She asked me if, in her absence, I would accompany her brother when he made the routine furniture deliveries and collections. My help was needed because he had refused to involve himself in 'the paperwork.' I agreed and the following Saturday we made four deliveries. He unloaded the cartons and I collected and signed for the mostly cash remittances,

sealing each group remittance in a separate envelope. The following Tuesday at cards I casually gave the four of them to her. I proudly noted that she accepted them without counting the money and, without so much as a glance, just tossed the envelopes in a drawer. This was the trust of friendship.

"A week later, she asked me not to forget to turn in the money I had collected from one of the hostesses. I was shocked. I heard that awful tone of falsity in her voice, and suddenly I felt cold with dread. My chest seemed to contract, and I could feel my heart beat against the pressure. I could hear a small voice in the distance explain that they wanted to bring the books up to date and that one account - which I distinctly knew I had paid - was still open. I heard myself protest weakly that I had indeed remitted the money, but my friend was saying, 'Oh, no. The first three, but not the fourth. I wish I had checked when you turned in the envelopes. It's my fault, really.' And her husband was saying sweetly, 'We figured maybe you had accidentally co-mingled the funds... that happens. You did have the envelopes all weekend.' Then he added ominously, 'But you still owe us that money.' I looked to her brother for support, knowing that he had witnessed the transfer of money. 'To be honest,' he said, 'I thought I only saw three envelopes.'

"I have an expression I use to get me through such situations.'This is tuition.' My hands were so cold that I could barely hold the pen to write the check for money that I did not owe. I kept repeating to myself, 'This is tuition. This is tuition. This is tuition.' What the lesson was I hadn't quite determined, but I knew it was some kind of learning experience. It was not 'always get a receipt.' It was a more profound lesson. I recalled that personal checks were in all four of the envelopes. The endorsement of these checks would have proven that I had, indeed, remitted the monies. But so much more was involved than money. I knew it and, what was worse; I knew that she knew it. I could hear that in the tone of her voice, too.

"But that awful night I simply invented a headache and excused myself from further card playing. I could see the smirk on her face as she walked me to the door, feigning much concern about my headache.

"I drove home like a robot, stopping when I should stop and turning when I should turn. But I wasn't really conscious of anything. When I finally got home and was safe in my own house I

tried to understand what had happened. I questioned my own version of the facts. Could I have been mistaken? I checked my car and my purse looking for the 4th envelope, knowing that I wouldn't find it.

"For the next day or so, I was numb, stunned.

"Looking back now it's difficult to pinpoint precisely the order of many small events that constitute a phase transition. Roughly, then, I'll give the following order: Stage One

"Phase 1: confusion and panic. Why had my friend done this to me? What had I done to deserve such treatment? Christmas was coming and I suddenly felt desperate to retain what friends I had left and make some new ones. I made sure I sent a card to everyone who had sent me one... and to a few I had purposely left out of my original Christmas card list. I accepted an invitation to join an Arts' discussion club, agreeing with servile gratitude to attend their next meeting in mid-January.

"I had planned to spend both a Christmas Day open house and New Year's Eve party at my friend's house, but now I had to make other plans. With a defiant 'Who needs her?' attitude, I called my brother, casually mentioning that I'd love to drop by his house Christmas Day to deliver presents to his kids... but my sister-in-law got on the phone and asked if I could come the day before or the day after. She had planned a big dinner for her family and they didn't know where they were going to put everyone as it was. I hung up the phone feeling as if I had been slapped.

"As cold as it was, I drove to the seashore and, along with a few other people who were equally uncommunicative, leaned on the boardwalk rail and watched the waves for hours. Then I returned to the motel and cried myself to sleep. I ate Christmas dinner in a Chinese restaurant. Then, using the holiday as an excuse, I called two old friends, trying to weasel an invitation for New Year's Eve. I said I planned to drive about this year and pay calls on dear friends I hadn't seen in a long time. The first one said, 'What a pity! We're going out of town to a party. I'd ask you to join us but it's by invitation only.' I said I understood. No problem. The second one I called said she was having a special New Year's Eve dinner for some foreign houseguests.

'There's four of them and four of us and that makes eight and you know how it is when you've

got flatware and dishes that are service for eight." I said I hoped it all went well, and when I hung up I began to sob. I had been groveling.

"When I checked out of the motel, the desk clerk said something to me that startled me. He asked, 'Were you taking a De-Sentimental Journey?' It was a reference to the song, Sentimental Journey. 'Gonna take a sentimental journey. Gonna set my heart at ease. Gonna make a sentimental journey to renew old memories.' He explained that a De-Sentimental Journey accomplished the opposite; and that many people came to the seashore at Christmas just to get away from houses that were haunted by memories of someone they had loved. They didn't want to be home for Christmas without that person. I said, 'Maybe some of them are embarrassed to be alone on family holidays.'

"Phase 2: self-blame had begun. Driving home I began to think constructively for the first time. I had been feeling sorry for myself, not knowing whom to blame. I liked my friend and I was so sure that the feeling was mutual. But now I saw how I had allowed myself to be deceived - that I had overlooked evidence of greed because if I had acknowledged it I would have had to devalue these friends whose company contributed so much to my own self-esteem. My pride had indeed blinded me to facts that everyone else could see. Proverbs 16:18 screamed at me: 'Pride goes before disaster; and a haughty spirit before a fall.' Chagrined, I recalled with regret how I had spoken so smugly to people who had tried to warn me.

"Phase 3: anger. By the time I arrived home I could see that the people who had tried to warn me were not exactly concerned about me. She had harmed them, and they wanted to retaliate - through me. I felt abused, betrayed and very angry - exploited by all the parties. I fantasized about bringing them all - especially her - to justice. I'd hire a private detective if necessary to prove that I had remitted the money. I'd expose her for the fraud she was. I didn't care what it took. So, she had sold my friendship for a few hundred dollars. Oh, I'd let her know it had been worth so very much more! I'd let them all know that I, for one, could not be treated so shabbily.

"I got over that phase fast. Fortunately my great urge to destroy the world came on a holiday weekend and all the agencies were closed. I went to bed vowing to take action at the first opportune minute; but I awakened with a more resigned attitude. I remember thinking, Why

should I spend more money to prove she is a liar and a thief? To whom would I present my case? I didn't have any more friends; and that she was a thief was precisely what the ones I used to have had been trying to tell me! All I'd accomplish was to give them a good laugh. To hell with her and the rest of them, too, I decided. Anger had turned to disgust.

"Phase 4: defeat and final humiliation. Having no alternative, I called the business associate of my friend who was to be my date for the New Year's Eve party and left a message with his secretary expressing my regret that unavoidable circumstances had forced me to cancel. I didn't ask for a call back, and he didn't make one.

"For the holiday weekend, I stayed home, hiding, planning not to answer the phone. Nobody called. I invented an elaborate excuse to tell people who asked me what I had done for New Year's Eve. Nobody asked. I went into an emotional retreat.

"The first few weeks of January were revelatory. Bereft of everything else, I turned to my Bible. As a Christian I was commanded to love my enemies and to do good to those who hated me. Impossible, I thought. How could anybody take such an order seriously? Surely, I thought, there had to be a secret message behind the commandment. It had to be a key or a metaphor. What did 'love' mean in this context? I brooded about it for days.

"Phase 5: dispassionate analysis. This was the big breakthrough. I began to look at myself objectively and also to see the world from my friend's point of view. Why was she so greedy? Why had she set me up so elaborately and played with me as a cat plays with a mouse before killing it. I recalled the flattering remarks she had made and the way I proudly accepted them. What made a person need to feel so superior and so controlling? Then I remembered how stricken she had been when her father was killed. The blank expression on her face. Her mother's grief. The blue star in the window replaced by a gold one. What had her step-father been like? She never spoke about him. Why had her brother, a grown man, come to live with her? I was no psychologist, but I could imagine troublesome situations that might have caused such behavior. It didn't account for her husband's behavior, but maybe he had his own story. I wasn't trying to excuse their behavior, I was only trying to explain it. Something had caused them to be so greedy. I thought of other "white collar" criminals and how they all found such excitement in

being shrewd or cunning. They delighted in outsmarting people. They seemed to be addicted to that rush of triumphant pleasure.

"I began to think about peculiar human conduct. Why did people brag about their accomplishments in order to conceal their sense of inferiority? Why did they bluster to mask timidity?

"What was friendship all about? My friend had stolen money from me. If she had asked me to give her twice the sum, I would have given it gladly. But a gift would have presented no challenge. Perhaps she needed to excel in something - as a fine actor delights in using his art to trick an audience into laughing or crying. She needed to execute a plan by which, in her mind, she would determine my happiness or misery. She could uplift me or degrade me as she chose.

"I began to see that she saw herself as being in a war or a contest. First, she divided the opposition. I had indeed severed my relationships with all our old friends. But then I asked myself, what if, at the beginning when I was still friendly with the others, she had cheated me then. Would I have brooded in silence or would I have been like the others, broadcasting my complaints about her? The ugly answer to that was that I would no doubt have joined that chorus.

"The friendship was an illusion. But why had I pursued it? She had represented quality to me; and I enhanced my own state by associating it with hers. As she was important, I became important for being near her. I examined my own history, and I suddenly realized how mechanical life was. It was all an illusion. A cause created an effect which was itself the cause of other effects. On and on it went. There was no point in blaming anyone or in praising anyone. It seemed so clear and matter-of-fact. People manipulated other people in order to satisfy their own needs. If they were afraid of being alone, they'd reach out to feel another body. If they couldn't bear the thought of being alone in pain, they'd injure someone else. Of course there were pleasant occasions and shared joys, but I already knew the bright side. I had never considered the dark side, the shadows that give definition to light.

"And suddenly I felt as sorry for her as I had felt for myself. She was pathetic, not evil. No, I didn't desire to call her and say, 'All is forgiven!' In my heart the problem simply evaporated. I truly had paid tuition, and I had completed the course. A great relief came over me, and I began

to pray more seriously than I had ever prayed before. "Judge not, lest ye be judged." There was a finality about the issue.

"In January she called me several times, and while I was polite, I simply had nothing to communicate. We chatted about the space program and politics. Once she called me from the hospital: she had had her appendix removed. I sent her a get-well card.

"Phase 6: separation. I had attended a few Arts' club meetings, but I didn't fit in. The members were excited about a new Ingmar Bergman film. They went in groups to see it. I went alone.

"Increasingly I found myself unable to connect properly with people. I could tell - in the club meetings and in my office - that people regarded me as standoffish one moment and pushy the next. If social interactions are a skill, I certainly had lost mine. At work I felt the most obvious change. I couldn't, for example, join in office humor anymore. For the first time I noticed that most of the jokes demeaned people: they were racist, sexist or depended on ethnic or religious slurs for their humor; and I can't explain why it was so, but I felt offended by the jokes.

Previously I would have laughed, and if the joke seemed witty enough, I'd repeat it. But now, the jokes made me uncomfortable and sad. Soon I was left out of the joke-telling circuit. Also, I couldn't indulge in gossip anymore. I wasn't self-righteous. It simply hurt me to hear people mocked or whispered about. I had gossiped with the best of them before; but now I was happy to be left out of people's conversations. In fact, I no longer cared about the opinions of others.

"In late February Lent began. I understood my religion in a new and profound way. I wanted to fear no evil. I wanted my cup to run over. I wanted to be alone with God. I began to crave solitude. I went to church every evening and felt sanctified by sacred space.

"By Easter I had become estranged from all my former friends and associates. I was still friendly whenever I saw them; but I didn't call them; and they didn't call me, either. I also had become impervious to disapproval. If somebody snubbed me, I shrugged it off. I didn't make excuses for people, I simply didn't care one way or the other whether they liked me or not. I was totally unattached to everyone. I enjoyed going alone to movies and restaurants. I browsed in bookstores and began to read the psychology of Carl Jung. I came to understand that I had integrated the Persona and both aspects of the Shadow. I was free.

"Months later I saw my friend's brother in a line outside a movie. I looked at him as I'd look at a poster that advertised an event that had already taken place; but he was excited to see me. He got his ticket first and came back to talk. His sister and he were no longer on speaking terms, he said, and then he apologized for 'getting involved' in her scheme to con me out of the money. I said, 'I understand. She's your sister, after all.' He laughed sardonically. 'Blood doesn't mean anything to her. She's been a liar and a cheat all her life. She just screwed me out of my half of an investment we made.' I shrugged and said, 'I guess she needed the money.' My unwillingness to side with him chafed him. 'You know,' he said with malignant satisfaction, 'that rosary she gave you - she stole it from one of the hostesses.' Then he walked away. The next day I delivered the rosary to the Bishop's office.

"A year later I met my husband in a bookstore. Our marriage was truly sacramental. We moved to another town and, with determination but without rancor, I distanced myself from my family. I could not get involved in their lives. I found no joy in their joys and no quarrel with their quarrels. I had heard that my friend had also moved away, but I did not know where.

"We had two children and raised them happily and successfully. My husband was ten years older than I; and when he died, I entered the convent - on the twenty-fifth anniversary of our wedding day. But all through the years I took care of my own family, I always reserved time each day for meditation and Bible study. In the convent, I finally achieved the mystical goal.

"When I look back I remember how hurt I had been by my friend. Now I shall be eternally grateful to her."

This lady, on her own and without a human teacher or a laboratory, entered the Bridal Chamber and delivered the Child. Curiously, it was not customary for nuns to discuss visions and certain other spiritual experiences in the convent; and so she often confided them to me. The only difficult period of her life I knew about occurred early in her noviate when, after having been a mother of children, she suddenly found herself a child's child. Most of the nuns who were her immediate superiors were young and inexperienced.

Requiring no esoteric texts, she had relied on her own intuitive powers, her willingness to adhere to her religion's principles, and her Bible's comfort and guidance to solve her own samsaric

problems. She remained devoted to Christ (who safely held her 'Hero' projection) and, as we would remain devoted to the Buddha (those of us who don't go around 'spitting in his face,' that is), never required any adjustment or severance of this bond.

Clearly, it was due to having already integrated her Shadow and Persona that she was able to enjoy domestic life so completely.

The difference between integration and simple withdrawal is the need to re-project the archetype. An integrated archetype is restored to the psyche as a permanent resident, manifesting itself in visions.

By the nature and content of these visions, a spiritual alchemist would easily be able to calibrate his progress.

Part 3 to follow, discusses the phases of the regimen



Image credit: Michael Veard

Part Three

Alchemical Detachment & Integration



“It was in the thirteenth century, when the Zen schools flourished, that alchemy became a fully-fledged ascetic and contemplative technique.”

- Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (University of Chicago Press)

The second stage of the work: The Regimen

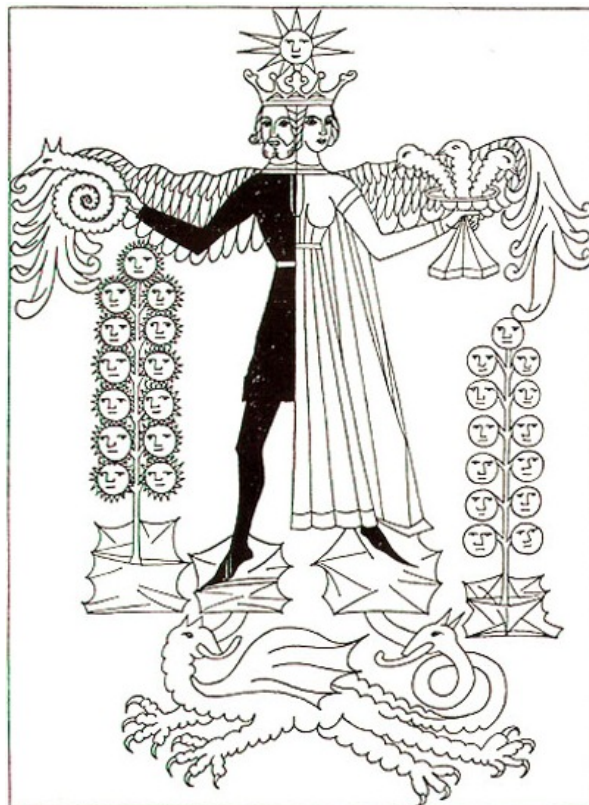
Jung favored a meditation technique he called Active Imagination, a variation of which has historically proven useful in spiritual alchemy.

The meditator constructs a sacred space by sitting before a blank wall (a [Ganzfeld](#) or 'complete field'). He mentally draws a large rectangle upon the wall, orienting it so that the base is the direction 'east'. He then imaginatively fills the area with pleasant walkways, flowers, trees and perhaps a pool. When he has sufficient familiarity with the space, he rotates (with a great surge of willpower) the vertical image ninety degrees, laying it down into a horizontal position; and then he lets the space widen to realistic dimensions. Then, mentally, he gets up and steps into the space. He should not see himself walking through the area as if he were looking at a picture, but

should instead feel physically present as if he were actually there, feeling the breeze and the gravel beneath his feet as he walks and interacts with persons he may encounter.

Jung said that at the outset of our attempts in this technique our ego takes the lead in the joint venture (between the conscious ego and the unconscious archetypes or gods) and indeed, in Buddhist sutras, we are often immediately instructed to visualize paradisiacal places, with contrived landscapes of fabulous crystalline trees, jeweled flowers, and so on. Elaborately decorated mandalas also aid in this imaginative journey. But, said Jung, once we train ourselves in the techniques of visualizing a suitably exotic place, the unconscious takes the lead; and we enter these meditative places automatically and without any ego participation. We do, however, recall our experiences there - and many of these spontaneously generated images will be intimately associated with psychological problems.

In reflecting upon the settings, characters, and events of the experiences, we can bring old injuries to new consciousness, understanding and repairing them. Each time we visit the sacred space we may go more deeply into the "mind" landscape. We often find illustrations of such park-like places in old alchemical texts.



The Hermetic androgyne - king and queen at the same time - stands on the dragon of Nature, between the 'tree of the sun' and the 'tree of the moon'. The androgyne has wings and carries in its right hand a coiled snake and in its left hand a cup with three snakes. Its male half is dressed in red, its female half in white. From the manuscript of Michael Cochem (ca. 1530), Vadian Library, St. Gallen.

As to some of the terminology peculiar to traditional alchemy, the major event was "Conjunction," The Rebis Experience - an event in which, if the alchemist or mystic was a male, his own Anima, as Venus or a feminine Bodhisattva, would subsume his ego-identity; and, in the guise of his mystical sister, he would enter the Bridal Chamber's sacred precincts. This was spiritual androgyny. In the Kundalini scheme it was the attainment of the Anahatta Chakra. The conjunction is illustrated by the main element in the Chakra design: two superimposed triangles, the six pointed star. The downward pointing triangle signified the female element and the upturned triangle, the male. This is a standard symbol for "wholeness" and is schematically related to Daoism's familiar yin/yang symbol.

The divine entity, as either Goddess or Bodhisattva, also had a male counterpart: Mercury for Venus and Hermes for Aphrodite, Avalokitesvara for Guan Yin, or Samantabhadra as warrior

rather than as the more familiar courtesan, and so on. As such, these or any other important celestial male figure would subsume the ego of a female mystic or alchemist (therefore, the androgynous Bodhisattva).



A variation of Heel Breathing for embryonic nourishment. From "Taoist Yoga: Alchemy & Immortality" by Lu K'uan Yu (Samuel Weiser, Inc.).

During meditation this holy spirit would "enter" and "seize" the meditator (rapture has the same root as rape) and it was this opposite-sex personality which would participate in the divine drama, the erotic characteristics of which are amply suggested by the variety of diagrams and illustrations that accompany alchemical texts. For long periods of time the meditator could remain in ecstasy as a witness to this drama. He or she might appear to be almost dead, oblivious to the outside world, requiring neither food nor sleep, lost in bliss.

As we've noted, even Divine Children require two parents, one mortal - the alchemist himself in his own ego identity, and one divine - his own Anima or Goddess. The "Conception," the actual coupling of ego and spirit, would occur a few years into the blissful Opus. This is one of the rare occasions during the opus in which the meditator actually sees himself, as himself, in the drama.

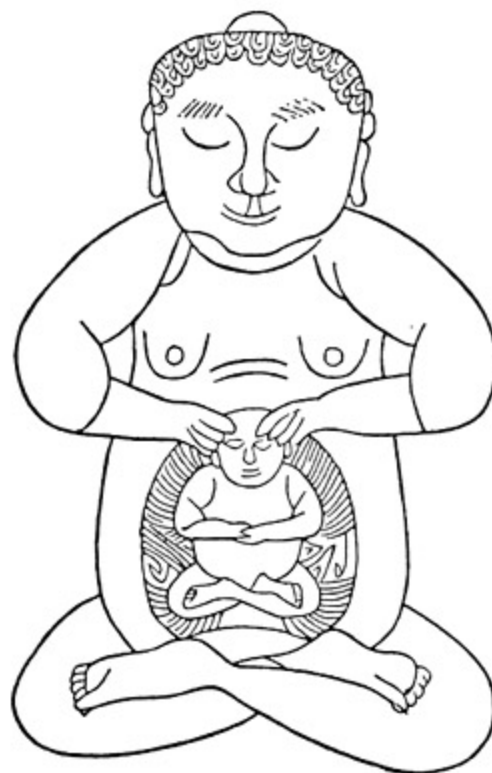
¹ ZATMA © 2017 Ming Zhen Shakya Not For Sale FREE Distribution ONLY

It should be noted that for men the seminal circulation kriya is said to produce extraordinary sensations - which, while not the true goal of the opus, is a sufficient goal for many practitioners. A few texts remain which give instructions in this procedure. ZBOHY's own Reverend Yin Zhao Shakya, an adept in the regimen, is currently writing a manual which he will furnish privately to students.

The Putrefaction indicates a death-and-corruption motif, the ego actually experiencing its own demise or at least finding itself "climbing the scaffold." But this death also insures the quickening of the Divine Child, accelerating the formation or 'Coagulation' of the Lapis, an event aided by - but not dependent on - the meditator's increasing proficiency in the circulation exercise.

The two Nigredos, indicate the initial "swamp" experience which is often called the Dark Night of the Senses; and the second Nigredo which is the terrible Dark Night of the Spirit. In alchemy all kinds of experiments, analogous to the seventy days of Natrium's "blackening" of the corpse, would be conducted to represent the necessary "dying to self."

圖胎道



圖胎出



Generation and delivery of Child, from Taoist Yoga: Alchemy & Immortality by Lu K'uan Yu (Samuel Weiser, Inc.).

坐 禪 圖

帝受安
文之觀也
孔之印也
能之立止

坐久忘所知忽覺月在地
冷冷天風來暮然到肝肺
俯視一泓水澄湛無物蔽
中有鐵籛遊默然自相契

無事此靜坐一日如兩日
若活七十年便是百四十
靜坐少思寡欲真心養氣存神
此是修真要訣學者可以青睞



端拱冥心圖



未到彼岸不能無法
 既至彼岸又焉用法
 頂中常放白毫光
 痴人猶待問菩薩

元君端拱坐玄都
 三疊胎仙舞八隅
 變化純陽天地合
 長生因此水工夫

遺照於外
 宅神於內
 冥心至趣
 而與吉會

無心於事
 無事於心
 超出萬幻
 確然一證

圖形現兒嬰



Two versions of "spirit materializations" from Taoist Yoga and The Secret of the Golden Flower respectively

And then through the fontanels the Divine Child, Lapis, Golden Flower, or Child Mercurius would emerge, Lotus Born.

Carl Jung noted that the alchemists' opinions were divided about this point. Some said that the Opus terminated with this event, while others attempted to perform supernatural feats of projecting the Divine Child into the world. Even today we find differences of opinion regarding the terminal point. Mahayana Buddhists consider the work to have come to an end and make no such attempt (our "Child" being the "Future" Buddha); but Daoists and many Vajrayana practitioners perform the "Egress" meditations and attempt to give corporeal existence to the Divine Child, in a kind of 'spirit made flesh' enterprise. The Spirit/Man would then go about performing salvific actions, healing the sick and benefiting all who are fortunate enough to come into contact with him. The "appearance in space" of these projected spirits is illustrated in two old Chinese texts.

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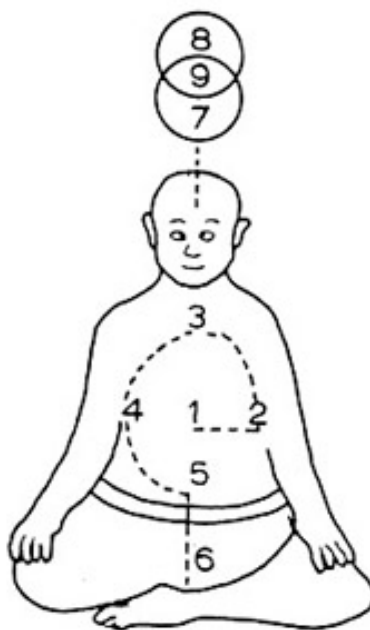




Meditation, Child (Lapis) formation, and delivery" from *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, translated by Richard Wilhelm. (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

I'd like to stress again the imaginative nature of this regimen. Recently I spoke to an oriental practitioner who challenged a woman's ability to perform the Microcosmic Orbit meditations because, as he gravely confided to me, a female does not have seminal fluid. I was surprised to encounter someone who was still taking literally these alchemical metaphors. Again, there is in fact no circulated seminal fluid. (Retained fluid is urinated at the first opportunity.) There is no mine in Muladhara, no bathtub in Svadhishthana, and no Snake in the coccyx. Furthermore, as illustrated by the personal account given in Part II, no exotic regimen really needs to be followed.

There are many models for the Conjunction or divine marriage. One popular model is labeled the union of the sun and moon, represented as brilliant light in the forehead (sun) and soft light in the occiput (moon) as seen in this diagram. Their intersection indicates the production and exit place of the Child.



In this diagram, the Yin energy drawn from the Yin meridians (1. heart, 2. spleen, 3. lungs, 4. liver, 5. kidneys) is collected and forced down to 6. the coccyx where it rises up the spine to the head to nourish the Child and to penetrate the 'cranial womb'. The Sun light (7. forehead)) and the Moon light (8. back of head) "beget" the Child, the exit point of which is 9. Notice should be given the "cross eyed" position of the eyes or concentration on the tip of the nose, one of several eye exercises that accompany the meditation.

We may list the steps of the mystical ladder as follows:

First, the person must admit defeat, a failure to find happiness in the material world - the First Nigredo. The aspiring mystic accepts responsibility for the mess he has made of his life. In his visionary or archetypal dreamlife he will see himself in a ruined house or some such dismal dwelling. The threatening figures (Enemy Shadow) will become increasingly less ominous; and, in his conscious life, he will begin to surrender all his old prejudices. His need for socializing diminishes. This is the obligatory dismantling of the Persona and both Shadow archetypes: humility; a withdrawal from friends; and an end to being judgmental.

Second, he makes a commitment to work towards salvation by revalorizing his priorities - getting beyond as Oscar Wilde put it, "Of knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing." The vows to reform are vows of personal integrity, sobriety, celibacy, etc., and he

accepts the rules of whichever path he chooses. In his visions a person of his same sex and age will appear, calmly sitting or walking beside him. He may also have a homo-erotic vision involving someone he finds a little irritating. This particular experience will likely indicate that he has fully integrated his own Enemy Shadow.

Third, he practices the various meditation techniques.... breathing exercises and meditation on seed, the various meditations on music, etc. He will see astonishing, repeating geometric patterns fill his visual field, or see dazzling light inside his head. In his archetypal dreams he will find himself in more expensive real estate; and he will interact with strange "opposite twins" or be intrigued by the number 4 in any of its exponential values, or encounter regal or commanding figures. In his meditations he will experience euphoria, and the Platonic Forms will likely reveal themselves to him. He will think more clearly and creatively, his mind expanding intellectually and his interests broadening.

Fourth, he becomes adept at the techniques he uses. He must be in control of his meditation techniques. He may, if he wishes, begin a meditation which involves the circulation of Prana or Chi. It can be a "clearing of the Nadis" or Microcosmic Orbit, or Light Circulation, or a similar meditation in which he envisions a force moving around his body. Most of the techniques he uses, such as the various "locks" (the root, abdominal, and neck lock) are well documented in Kundalini Yoga texts.

There is an assortment of mystical experiences that accompany his progress. Sounds of bees buzzing or of Thunder clapping; feelings of butterfly wings on the skin or the absence of tactile sensations in the hands or feet as in the 'glove response'; heat; perspiration; excessive salivation; being trounced around as if in an earthquake; light seen in the back of the head as soft moonlight or in the front of the forehead as brilliant sunlight. Yantras in all colors and designs may fill the visual field, or auras may emanate from otherwise ordinary objects. The meditator may smell perfume or other haunting fragrances. And so on. There are additional visions of animals - snakes, pandas, flying horses, a shark or whale, birds - eagles or hummingbirds, and of trees and flowers.; or of people who have an unmistakable majesty.

Fifth, he experiences extraordinary heat generated in the base of his spine. This is not a warm fuzzy feeling. Rather it feels as though it calibrates somewhere around 1000 C.

Sixth, while in a visionary or meditative state he spontaneously experiences spiritual androgyny, the transsexual Rebis experience. In the Bridal Chamber he (as 'she') encounters a royal person... identified by a radiate crown. Now, whenever he meditates, he will enter a rapturous state in which a drama occurs. In the role of his Anima he enjoys the starring role in this drama, an "other world" production that will run for several blissful years - but only while he is in the meditative state. These are the years in which, if he were in an oriental monastery, he would be treated like royalty. He would be given a private apartment near the monastery and all his meals brought to him. He can live in such delightful seclusion for up to three years.

Seventh, he experiences the "conception" vision in which he, in his samsaric existence impregnates his own Anima. This coupling is done under sterile, totally non-erotic circumstances.

Eighth, he experiences the death of his ego. This is usually a brief vision in which the person actually sees himself preparing for death. He is extremely calm about the event.

Ninth, he experiences the dreaded Dark Night of the Spirit visions (the Second Nigredo), in which he (in his Anima form) engages in rather awful experiences in all of which he willingly participates.

Tenth, he experiences, through the fontanel, the emergence of the Immortal Foetus. This is the wily Child Mercurius. This archetype presents a few problems. The great Gerhard Dorn claimed that to project this archetype onto someone (which is usually an older person's projection onto a younger person) is to project the residua of all the other archetypes. With luck, it is a brief experience.

Here is Jung's retelling of Grimm's fairy tale, "The Spirit in the Bottle," which, Jung says, "contains the quintessence and deepest meaning of the Hermetic mystery as it has come down to us today:"

"Once upon a time there was a poor woodcutter. He had an only son, whom he wished to send to a high school. However, since he could give him only a little money to take with him, it was used up long before the time for the examinations. So the son went home and helped his father with the work in the forest. Once, during the midday rest, he roamed the woods and came to an immense old oak. There he heard a voice calling from the ground, 'Let me out, let me out!' He dug down among the roots of the tree and found a well-sealed glass bottle from which, clearly, the voice had come. He opened it and instantly a spirit rushed out and soon became half as high as the tree. The spirit cried in an awful voice: 'I have had my punishment and I will be revenged! I am the great and mighty spirit Mercurius, and now you shall have your reward. Whoso releases me, him I must strangle.' This made the boy uneasy and, quickly thinking up a trick, he said, 'First, I must be sure that you are the same spirit that was shut up in that little bottle.' To prove this, the spirit crept back into the bottle. Then the boy made haste to seal it and the spirit was caught again. But now the spirit promised to reward him richly if the boy would let him out. So he let him out and received as a reward a small piece of rag. Quoth the spirit: 'If you spread one end of this over a wound it will heal, and if you rub steel or iron with the other end it will turn into silver.' Thereupon the boy rubbed his damaged axe with the rag, and the axe turned to silver and he was able to sell it for four hundred thaler. Thus father and son were freed from all worries. The young man could return to his studies, and later, thanks to his rag, he became a famous doctor." (From *Alchemical Studies*, C.G. Jung, Bollingen Series XX, Princeton University Press.)

The bottle is, of course, our own psyche.

We cannot read alchemical texts without being impressed by the cryptic nature of the presentations, the diagrams, the illustrations, the metaphors illustrated to incomprehensibility. It is secrecy mandated by self-preservation. Spiritual aspirants of every kind have historically been persecuted by the merely religious.

Perhaps it is the other side of the Shadow/Persona coin: a mystic is uncomfortable in groups, but he or she, by definition, is not shadow-ridden and therefore has no urge to persecute. But a merely religious person, who cleaves to the dubious security of herd formation, is not only fearful but, subject as he is to heroic inflations, clamors to ostracize anyone who seems suspiciously different. He therefore strives to purge from the collective gene pool that which he,

in his ignorance, deems an objectionable mutant. We can imagine the suspicion with which those self-righteous zealots (we know and love so well) viewed the spooky beakers and retorts of the Alchemist's laboratory.

The sad fact is that when people are emotionally involved in another person they assume godlike proportions in their judgments of him. If they cast the hero archetype upon him, they idolize him, refusing to see anything "objectionable" about him. If they cast the Enemy Shadow upon him, they despise him, refusing to see anything admirable in him. They have remade God in the image of man, and they are that man.

And this is the problem that spiritual persons face when they are confronted by the merely religious. It is the source of much sorrow and mischief. Alchemists always found themselves to be targets of inflated bigots, but they were hardly alone. In or out of a laboratory, with or without chemical reactions, spiritual alchemists or mystics fared no better than those who puttered around their crucibles and cauldrons.

Always in the audience was someone who believed that he understood more than the knower, that he saw more than visionary; but unable to gain his own following, he sought in the spiritual teacher's assembly a ready-made congregation he could exploit. Any tactic was a good one, honor being a superfluous quality to self-righteous interpreters of divine intent.

Even as recently as half a century ago in France, a celibate spiritual alchemist, Omraan Mikhael Aivanhov, became the victim of false accusations (later retracted) for proposing spiritual pursuits that, though effective, are by today's standards extremely tame. He favored a specialized Solar approach to Union; but his comments to ordinary people regarding attitudes and practices are not without interest. According to his biographer, "In answering [a group of people in India] why the yoni and lingam were always shown united and not separately, he said, 'The Rishis have joined the two principles in this symbol, but in human beings they are still separate. In the temples they are united, but not in yourselves. You are either a woman, and in that case you continually seek the other principle, man; or you are a man, continually in search of the other principle, woman. The two principles are separated. If they were not, you would not always be looking for the one that is missing. You are not whole and complete in your own person, this is why you look for a

partner to make you whole. Great sages, the Rishis and Saddhus, possess the two principles within themselves: they are both man and woman. This is why they do not need to marry. They possess the qualities of both principles..."(Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov: a Biography by Louise Marie Frenette (Suryoma, Ltd.)



Old Chinese illustration of the "copulation" of male and female energies in the brain's alchemical cauldron. Note that the female rides the 'masculine' dragon and the male rides the 'feminine' tiger.

Aivanhov, says Frenette, "further explained to couples how to live their love for each other without sinking to levels that sterilize the spiritual life. Of paramount importance in his view is to recognize the potency of sexual energy and use it for one's spiritual development. 'The sexual organs are a synopsis of creation as a whole. The force that lies hidden in human beings is a sacred, divine force by means of which they can attain all their desires. Let me give you an example: if you live on the fifth floor, the water you need has to be pumped up to you, and this necessitates a certain amount of pressure. If you do away with that pressure, the water will not

reach all the floors. But men do their best to lower the pressure within themselves and reduce it to zero. They cannot endure it. And yet, this force should be allowed to rise through all the floors and reach the brain. It is the pressure that causes it to rise so that you can use it. But most people continually rid themselves of it, and consequently can never make use of it on the higher planes."

For such benign teachings as this, he was imprisoned for four years before the authorities, realizing finally how they had been duped by self-serving perjurers, released him.

At other times certifiably intelligent people will astonish us with their smug naiveté. Atheists will observe starving children in the world and in consideration of such suffering will decide to dismiss the existence of God, saying, "God has to be better than the best man I know, and the best man I know would never permit these children to starve so wretchedly." Ergo, there is no God. They offer no suggestions as to how the best man would have created the cosmos.

Others, however, who are religious and do not wish to surrender their belief in God, still require a scenario by which God can acknowledge his errors and make the necessary corrections. Therefore, people who have been made to suffer unjustly in one human life have to be given another. We can only assume that God will not drop the ball a second time.

Invariably it is the least informed persons who superimpose their own ignorance upon the impressions of the truly spiritual. As translators or biographers or commentators, they foist their paltry knowledge and self-righteous standards upon a text and decide what is significant and deserves repetition and what is extraneous or misleading and must be expurgated. Marie-Louise von Franz relates the example of Saint Niklaus von de Flue, the Swiss saint, who "had a vision of a wanderer, a divine figure which came toward him wearing a shining bearskin, and singing a song of three words. From the original report it is obvious that the saint was convinced that either God, or Christ, was appearing to him," says von Franz, "but the original report got lost, and until about eighty years ago there was only a report made by one of his earliest biographers, who told the story more or less correctly, but omitted the bearskin!" (Alchemy: An Introduction to the Symbolism and the Psychology, by M.L. von Franz, Inner City Books, Toronto.)

Evidently the biographer had decided that the bearskin was not suitable raiment, that it detracted from the sanctity of the visionary scene. What would Christ be doing wearing a bearskin? For whatever reason, this garment was excluded from the account. And not until the Saint's original text had been found did people learn what the divine figure had worn.

This happens frequently when a person confides a visionary experience to someone who has no spiritual knowledge but does not know that he does not know. He knows other things: bears, being sacred animals to primitives, may furnish the garb for heroic figures like Hercules. But how can anyone dare compare Hercules to Christ? It is an affront to Christ to dress him so rudely. And so the account must be amended to suit the interpreter's ideas of propriety.

Buddhist sutras have grown huge with such alterations. It was once permissible for the translator to enter the text and comment upon its more exotic or abstruse elements in order that the meaning be made more accessible to a foreign or unlettered audience. Accretions multiplied so exponentially that some of our most famous sutras require days for us, sitting comfortably, to read; but they are alleged to have been spoken at a single sitting, without benefit of microphone, to a throng of hundreds gathered out of doors. Many sutras are now so cumbersome and repetitious that they are very nearly counter-productive. Any attempt to pare them down to manageable or realistic size would, however, be met with serious objection. Buddhist authorities have now accepted them "as is" and for better or worse, that is how they must be left.

On the other hand, once the Keepers of the Flame decide that an intellectual pursuit is heretical, it may require centuries to cleanse the subject of its stigma. Even into modern times, the charge of cultic insanity still clings to those who practiced spiritual alchemy. It is commonly known that Sir Isaac Newton devoted the last twenty years of his life to following an alchemical regimen. But when scientific scholars looked at his half-Latin, half-English "scribbling" they could not decipher the material. They culled his writings and removed such "nonsense." They put their Imprimatur upon the Principia, Optiks, and a few other texts, but not on Newton's mystical work.

In her *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy* (Cambridge University Press), Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs discusses the problems caused by such academic embarrassment. She quotes the letters of

Newton's assistant to a contemporary, Dr. William Stukeley, who was preparing a biography of Sir Isaac Newton: "He [Sir Isaac] very rarely went to bed till two or three of the clock, sometimes not until five or six, lying about four or five hours, especially at spring and fall of the leaf, at which times he used to employ about six weeks in his laboratory, the fire scarcely going out either night or day; he sitting up one night and I another, till he had finished his chemical experiments, in the performances of which he was the most accurate, strict, exact. What his aim might be I was not able to penetrate into, but his pains, his diligence at these set times made me think he aimed at something beyond the reach of human art and industry..... On the left end of the garden was his elaboratory, near the east end of the chapel, where he at these set times employed himself in with a great deal of satisfaction and delight. Nothing extraordinary, as I can remember, happened in making his experiments; which, if there did, he was of so sedate and even temper, that I could not in the least discover it.." Newton's assistant further stated that Sir Isaac, though possessing all sorts of laboratory equipment, made very little use of such articles, preferring to confine his attention to "the crucibles."

Clearly, we are not observing a scientist at work here - this is obviously a spiritual regimen - even down to the astrologically fortuitous timing of the experiments; but the biographer, Dr. Stukeley, could not accept such an explanation and so he recorded these actions as indicating that, "He [Sir Isaac] wrote likewise an intire work on chymistry, explaining the principles of matter, and elementary components, from that abstruse art; on experimental and mathematical proof. He had himself a good opinion of this work; but the MS. was unluckily burnt in the laboratory, which casually took fire. He never could undertake it again, a loss not to be sufficiently regretted.... As to chymistry in general, we may very well presume Sir Isaac from his long and constant application to that pryrotechnical amusement, had made very important discoveries in this branch of philosophy, which had need enough of his masterly skill, to rescue it from superstition, from vanity and imposture, and from the fond inquiry of alchymy and transmutation. By this means Sir Isaac carried his inquiry very far downwards into the ultimate component parts of matter, as well as upwards towards the boundless regions of space...."

However ludicrous this distortion is - especially in light of the unbiased eye-witness account of the assistant, it was still easier to accept than the possibility that Newton's work was spiritual.

Again we see the extraordinary prejudice against Newton's non-traditional spiritual pursuits in the attitudes of academics towards his favorable references to the work of Jacob Boehme, a Christian mystic who recorded his ecstatic experiences in the alchemical regimen. Boehme was an ordinary shoemaker and that Newton, the greatest mind of the seventeenth century, would quote a shoemaker was preposterous! There had to be an error! And surely he had a clever reason for reading Hermes Trismegistus. Perhaps this was merely an indication of the great man's scope. Consensus preserved his reputation by determining that he was a pure chemist of the same stripe "as Robert Boyle" according to one author, or, in the words of others, "Newton was not in any admissible sense of the word an alchemist."

Even in modern times the stigma remains. When John Maynard Keynes purchased Newton's manuscripts (which had lain collecting dust for centuries) and donated them for public display and study, people still refused to believe that there might have been a coded spiritual regimen recorded in the texts. Even as recent a writer as Isaac Asimov contumeliously dismissed Newton's alchemical works as gibberish.

After Boyle and Lavoisier, et al, scientific chemistry quickly leached the mystique from the projection-receiving substances of the Alchemical Opus; and the day of Hermes Trismegistus was over.

So an alchemist of old studied the heavens and chemical reactions not to understand astronomy or chemistry but to understand himself. He ruthlessly examined his own psyche and his own conduct. He meditated upon chemical change, not caring to understand valence, but to understand why he felt anger and lust, or why he fell victim to gluttony, greed, pride, envy or sloth. He knew, for the regimen clearly told him, that the way to heaven was through purgation, the purification of intrinsic spirit.

He did not purchase the services of psychics or spirit channelers to direct him to heaven. He did not limit God's power to transform the soul that seeks transformation; and he was willing to do the hard work of assisting the process of qualifying for Grace. The prayers, the incantations, the chemical formulas meticulously followed, the fierce concentration upon the changes being wrought inside the glass beaker or flask led him into contemplation and separated him from the

mundane world, settling and organizing his mind. He studied his dreams and visions for clues about his inner development, his spiritual progress. In his laboratory, he was in spiritual, monastic retreat. Ultimately, no matter how much we consult the various alchemical texts we arrive at the same conclusion: the chemical reactions functioned as yantras, the formulas as mantras, the diagrams as mandalas; the paraphernalia as decorative or functional altarware.

In the Opus, the spiritual aspirant expanded into Paramashiva's Infinity. He did not shrink God down to human dimensions. He would be seized, apprehended by God. He would know the power of his Buddha Self and he would find, contrary to the wonderments of Homer J. Simpson, that divine power requires no sidearm reinforcement.



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